CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A client administration method of administering a group of clients, each

5 client providing presence information, the method comprising:

a presence-storing step of accepting a setting of presence information of the

clients including a first client, and storing the presence information client by client;

a notification recipient-storing step of storing identifiers of watcher clients for

respective clients, each of the watcher clients being provided with the presence

10 information of at least one of the clients in the clients group ;

an identifier-changing step of accepting a change of the identifier of the first

client;

a decision step of deciding a watcher client of the first client or at least one of a

plurality of watcher clients of the first client to be one or more identifier notification

15 recipients according to the change of the identifier of the first client; and

an identifier-transmitting step of transmitting a new identifier of the first client to

one or more identifier notification recipients decided in said decision step.

2. The client administration method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the

20 decision step deciding all of a plurality of watcher clients of the first client to be identifier

notification recipients according to the change of the identifier of the first client.

3. The client administration method as set forth in claim 1, further

comprising:

25 a subscriber client-storing step of storing identifiers of subscriber clients so that

each subscriber client is associated with at least one client that provides the presence information thereto, the subscriber client being provided with the presence information of at least one client of the clients group; and

said decision step deciding a client to be an identifier notification recipient, the client being both a watcher client of the first client and a subscriber client of the first client.

4.   The client administration method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

a presence-notifying step of notifying the first client's watcher client of new presence information according to the setting of the presence information;

a notification history-storing step of storing a notification history of the presence information; and

said decision step extracting at least one of a plurality of watcher clients of the first client based on the notification history, and deciding to be one or more identifier notification recipients.

5.   The client administration method as set forth in claim 1, further comprising:

a messaging step of administering distribution of text messages exchanged between the clients;

a distribution history step of storing a distribution history of distributed text messages; and

said decision step extracting at least one of a plurality of watcher clients of the first client based on the distribution history, and deciding to be one or more identifier

notification recipients.

6.	The client monitor method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

said presence-storing step storing the presence information of the clients so that

5	the presence information is associated with an access level, the access level limiting

notification recipients of the presence information of the clients;

said notification recipient-storing step further storing the access level of each

watcher client; and

said decision step deciding a portion of a plurality of watcher clients of the first

10	client to be the identifier notification recipients based on the access level of each watcher

client.

7.	The client administration method as set forth in claim 1, wherein, said

identifier-transmitting step further transmitting display data for displaying the change of

15	the identifier of the first client to one or more identifier notification recipients.

8.	The client administration method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said

identifier-transmitting step further transmitting attribute information related to the change

of the identifier of the first client to one or more identifier notification recipients.

20

9.	The client administration method as set forth in claim 8, wherein said

identifier-changing step accepting registration of the attribute information.

10.	A client administration device that administers a group of clients, each

25	client providing presence information, the device comprising:

30

presence-storing unit for accepting a setting of presence information of the clients

including a first client, and storing the presence information client by client;

notification recipient-storing unit for storing identifiers of watcher clients for

respective clients, each of the watcher clients being provided with the presence

5   information of at least one of the clients in the clients group;

identifier-changing unit for accepting a change of the identifier of the first client;

decision unit for deciding a watcher client of the first client or at least one of a

plurality of watcher clients of the first client to be one or more identifier notification

recipients according to the change of the identifier of the first client; and

10   identifier-transmitting unit for transmitting a new identifier of the first client to

one or more identifier notification recipients decided by said decision unit.

     11.   A computer-readable storage medium storing a client administration

program for administering a group of clients, each client providing presence information,

15   the program executing:

a presence-storing step of accepting a setting of presence information of the

clients including a first client, and storing the presence information client by client;

a notification recipient-storing step of storing identifiers of watcher clients for

respective clients, each of the watcher clients being provided with the presence

20   information of at least one of the clients in the clients group ;

an identifier-changing step of accepting a change of the identifier of the first

client;

a decision step of deciding a watcher client of the first client or at least one of a

plurality of watcher clients of the first client to be one or more identifier notification

25   recipients according to the change of the identifier of the first client; and

31

an identifier-transmitting step of transmitting a new identifier of the first client to one or more identifier notification recipients decided in said decision step.

12. A client administration program executed by a computer that administers a group of clients, each client providing presence information, the program causing the computer to execute the steps of:

a presence-storing step of accepting a setting of presence information of the clients including a first client, and storing the presence information client by client;

a notification recipient-storing step of storing identifiers of watcher clients for respective clients, each of the watcher clients being provided with the presence information of at least one of the clients in the clients group ;

an identifier-changing step of accepting a change of the identifier of the first client;

a decision step of deciding a watcher client of the first client or at least one of a plurality of watcher clients of the first client to be one or more identifier notification recipients according to the change of the identifier of the first client; and

an identifier-transmitting step of transmitting a new identifier of the first client to one or more identifier notification recipients decided in said decision step.

13. A client administration method of administering a group of clients, each client providing presence information, the method comprising:

a presence-storing step of accepting a setting of presence information of the clients including a first client, and storing the presence information client by client;

information-storing step of storing client-relationship information for respective clients, the client-relationship information containing one or more identifiers of one or

32

more clients relating to provision of presence information of the first client thereto and/or one or more identifiers of one or more clients relating to a request made by the first client, the request being for provision of presence information of those clients to the first client;

an identifier-changing step of accepting a change of the identifier of the first

5   client;

a decision step of deciding one or more clients to be one or more identifier notification recipients according to the change of the identifier of the first client, one or more identifiers of one or more clients being contained in the client relationship information stored in association with the first client; and

10   an identifier-transmitting step of transmitting a new identifier of the first client to one or more identifier notification recipients decided in said decision step.